

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15

ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01 /146 W

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R 151145Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3809

INFO CJCS

SECDEF

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 12573

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, CB

SUBJECT: CONSCRIPTION UPDATE

REF: PHNOM PENH 12371

1. SUMMARY. RECRUITS FLOWED IN AT A PACE OF 300 PER DAY OVER THE PAST 3 DAYS BUT A BOTTLENECK IN TRANSPORTATION HAS PRODUCED A PROBLEM OF OVERCROWDING AT THE RECEPTION CENTER WHERE 1352 ARE PRESENTLY BACKED UP. DEFENSE MINISTER THAPPANA NGINN HAS TAKEN A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THIS MATTER AND SOME PROGRESS WAS EVIDENT TODAY. KHAND OFFICIALS REPORT THAT CONSCRIPTION IS INCREASINGLY BEING ACCEPTED BY THE POPULATION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FANK RECEPTION CENTER HAS RECEIVED AN AVERAGE OF 300 NEW RECRUITS PER DAY OVER THE PAST 3 DAYS FOR A TOTAL OF 8213 (6889 VOLUNTEERS AND 1224 CONSCRIPTS) BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON NOVEMBER 14. THE COUNT AT 1630 HOURS TODAY WAS 100. RESULTS SINCE LAST UPDATE
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ARE: NOVEMBER 12, 402; NOVEMBER 13, 150; AND NOVEMBER 14,

350. 180 OF THESE WERE FROM KANDAL PROVINCE, 60 FROM THE 1ST MILITARY REGION, AND 25 FROM THE 2ND MILITARY REGION.

3. THE INABILITY OF TRAINING CENTERS IN THE PHNOM PENH AREA TO RECEIVE MORE RECRUITS AND THE FAILURE TO PROVIDE FOR AIRCRAFT TO TAKE THEM TO REAM AND SISOPHON (ROUTES 5 AND 4 ARE BOTH CUT) HAS RESULTED IN A BACKLOG OF RECRUITS AT THE RECEPTION CENTER. THE RECEPTION CENTER, WITH A CAPACITY OF 500, IS CONSEQUENTLY EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS OF OVERCROWDING EVEN THOUGH 236 OF THE RECRUITS HAVE BEEN TEMPORARILY HOUSED AT THE FORMER CASINO. THE PROBLEM WAS EASED SOMEWHAT TODAY WHEN 211 RECRUITS WERE SENT BY AIR TO REAM AND SOSOPHON BUT 1352 REMAIN. DEFENSE MINISTER THAPPANA NGINN IS TAKING A PERSONAL ROLE IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

4. OFFICIALS AT KHAND DECHO, PHNOM PENH'S LARGEST, TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER TODAY THAT THE POPULATION IS DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONSCRIPTION PROGRAM AND CONSEQUENTLY THEY SEE NO PROBLEM IN PRODUCING RECRUITS AT THE CURRENT LEVEL FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE. THE GOOD TREATMENT WHICH FANK HAS ACCORDED RECENT RECRUITS HAS HAD AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE IN REDUCING AVERSION TO MILITARY SERVICE, ACCORDING TO THESE OFFICIALS, AND THE PROSPECT OF FREE RICE IS AN ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT ATTRACTION UNDER THE PRESENT DIFFICULT ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES. (COMMENT: CITY OFFICIALS HAVE SHIFTED OFTEN AND RAPIDLY BETWEEN OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM REGARDING THE PROSPECTS FOR CONSCRIPTION BUT THIS LATEST TURN TOWARDS OPTIMISM IS NEVERTHELESS A HOPEFUL SIGN).

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Message Attributes

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